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OF KEEPING

A Land-Force

In Times of

PEACE:

WITH

The DANGERS that may follow on it.

Printed in the Year 1697.

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A LETTER, BALLANCING THE NECESSITY OF KEEPING A Land-Force In Times of PEACE.

SIR,

WE have at last an Honourable Peace, which was much Longed for by us all, but Despaired of by many. *England* is now the Wonder of the World; nothing can hurt us, but Animosities and Jealousies

among our ſelves. If we maintain the Peace with as much Prudence and Judgment, as we have ſhewed Spirit and Courage in carrying on the War, we ſhall give Laws to all about us; and ſecure that Quiet, which we have procured to the reſt of *Europe*.

The Means of doing this, is now the common Subject of Diſcourſe. All agree in one Thing, That we ought to maintain our Empire on the Sea with powerful Fleets, ſtrong Summer and Winter Guards; and that our Stores ought to be well filled, and our great Ships kept in ſuch a State, that we may be in a condition upon ſhort Warning to ſet out Royal Fleets. This is ſo neceſſary, that I ſuppoſe it is needleſs to ſpend more time upon it. The only Point in which our Opinions may perhaps differ, is, whether we ought to maintain ſo conſiderable a Force at Land, as will be ſufficient to make a Stand againſt an Invaſion; or whether the Militia can be made ſo conſiderable, that we may truſt to it at home, as well as to our Fleets abroad, and be ſafe in this.

I will not ſuggeſt ſo unbecoming a Thought, as to imagine that any of our Neighbours will ſeek to take Advantages againſt us, or break the Peace, and invade us contrary to the Honour and Faith of Treaties. No, I will not ſuſpect it. But the beſt Guaranty of a Peace, is a good Force to maintain it: And the ſureſt way to keep

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all our Neighbours to an exact Performance of Articles, is to be upon our Guard. They will be then faithful to Agreements; when they ſee no Opportunities of Surprizing us, and that our Peace does not lay us aſleep, and make us forget the Art of War. I mean, it is no Reflection on any of the Neighbouring Princes, when I conclude that their Faith is not ſo abſolute a Security, but that we muſt help them to be true to their Word, by ſhewing them that they are not like to gain much by breaking it.

But miſtake me not:

When I ſeem to prepare you to conſider the Neceſſity of keeping a Land-Force, I am far from the Thought of a *Standing Army*. Any Man who would pretend to give a Jealouſy of the Nation to the King, and ſuggeſt that he could not be ſafe among them without he were environ'd with Guards and Troops, as it was in the late Reigns, ought to by abhorred by every true *Engliſh man*, by every Man who loves Liberty, and his Country. The Caſe at preſent is, Whether conſidering the Circumſtances that we and our Neighbours are now in, it may not be both prudent and neceſſary for us to keep up a reaſonable Force from Year to Year. The State of Affairs both at Home and Abroad being every Year to be conſidered in Parliament, that ſo any ſuch Force may be either encreaſed, leſſened, or quite laid aſide, as they ſhall ſee cauſe. I will not Argue with you ſo unfairly, as to urge much the Rea-

ſons that we have of Truſting the King; for how much ſoever may be ſaid on this Head, either from his Temper, his Circumſtances, his Intereſt, and the Courſe of his paſt Life, either with Relation to the United Provinces, or to us here in *England*, and with how much Reaſon ſoever this might be proſecuted, yet I will not lay much Weight on it; for it is not juſt to preſs an Argument that puts another Man in Pain, when he goes to anſwer it: I know it may be ſaid, That Men are but Men; ſo that we make a dangerous Experiment of their Virtue, when we put too much in their Power: And that what is done to one King, who deſerves it, and will manage it faithfully, will be made an Argument to do the ſame for another King, that has neither Merit nor Capacity to entitle him to ſo entire a Confidence.

To ſay all in one Word, if we were in the ſame Condition in which we and our Neighbours were an Age ago, I ſhould reject the Propoſition with Horrour. But the Caſe is altered; the whole World, more particularly our Neighbours, have now got into the miſtaken Notion of keeping up a mighty Force; and the powerfulleſt of all theſe happens to be our next Neighbour, who will very probably keep up great Armies: And we may appear too Inviting, if we are in ſuch an open and unguarded Condition, that the Succeſs of the Attempt may ſeem to be not only probable, but certain. *England* is an open Country, full of Plenty, every where able to Subſiſt an

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Army: Our Towns and Cities are all open; our Rivers are all fordable; no Paſſes nor ſtrong Places can ſtop an Enemy, that ſhould Land upon us. So that the whole Nation lies open to any Army that ſhould once come into it. To this you may reply, Can an Army be brought together, with a Fleet to bring it over, and we know nothing of it? Theſe Things require time, and we cannot be ſuppoſed ſo deſtitute of Intelligence as not to know of ſuch Preparations. In ſuch a caſe, our Fleet will cover us, while our Militia may be exerciſed, and marched where the Danger is apprehended. This may ſeem plauſible, and will no doubt work on ſuch as do not conſider Things with the Attention that is neceſſary. But do not we remember, that we were lately twice almoſt ſurprized; once from *La Hogue*, and again from *Calais*. We muſt not expect that God will always work Miracles for us, if we are wanting to our ſelves. If in a time of War and Jealouſy we were ſo near the being fatally overrun, without either Warning or Intelligence; it is much more poſſible to ſee ſuch Deſigns laid in a time of Sloth and Quiet, when we are under no Fears nor Apprehenſions: And this may be ſo managed, that the Notice we may have of it, may come too late for us to be able to prevent or reſiſt it. And what will our Intelligence ſignify, if we are in no condition either to hinder the Deſcent, or to withſtand the Force that may be ſent againſt us. Abſolute Governments, where all

all depends on the Will of the Prince, and where Men are ruined, who fail either in performing what is expected from them, or in keeping the Secresy that is enjoyned them, can both contrive and execute Things in another manner, than can be conceived by those who have the Happiness to live in free Governments. Troops may have such Orders for Marches and Counter-marches, that those who are on the Place shall not be able to judge what is intended, till it is not possible to hinder it. Cross Winds may make this come yet later, to those who have a Sea between them. Orders may be given to many different Persons in many different Places, who shall know nothing of one another, till they meet in a General Rendezvous.

It is true, we must suppose that we shall have good Fleets abroad, but one would not put so great a thing, as the Safety of the Nation, to such a Hazard, nor depend upon a single Security when that is liable to Accidents. The same Wind that may bring over a Fleet, and Army, to invade us, may keep our Ships in Port; so that it shall not be possible for them to look out, or if they should have a favourable Minute to get out, it may so shatter them that they shall not be able to defend either our Seas or our Ports. This may well be supposed, for it really happened when the King landed first in *England*. The late King had then a powerful Fleet, which, if it could have engaged the *Dutch*, would have been probably too hard

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for them, especially considering the Transport Fleet that they guarded; but the East Wind, that brought over the King, kept them in the River 'till the *Dutch* had past them; and when they got out, a Storm stop'd and shattered them, so that without being able to come to any Action, they were laid up. And would any Man hazard the Nation upon such a Contingency.

But the last thing in reserve is our *Militia*. Great Bodies may be brought together; The Men are brave, capable of Discipline, and they naturally love their Countrey: Their Officers being Men of Estates, may be well trusted with the Concerns of the Nation, in which they have so good a Stake.

I will never enter upon so invidious an Argument, as to disparage our *Militia*, or derogate from them: I do not doubt but they are much the best in the World, and if they had a Militia to deal with, I should doubt little of the Decision. But you and I have seen Armies too much not to know the difference that is between Troops that have been long trained, who have learned the Art and are accustomed to the Discipline of War, and the best Bodies of raw and undisciplined Multitudes. The whole Method of War is now such, that disciplined Troops must prove a very unequal Match, to much greater Numbers of Men, who yet perhaps, upon half their Practice, might prove too hard for them. I know it will be urged, that our Militia may be so trained and modelled,

delled, as to be made more capable of Service then perhaps they are at preſent. This is a Work of Time; a Project that depends upon ſo many Particulars, and may be ſubject to ſo many Slips in the Execution, that it muſt be confeſs'd a Nation is much expoſed, if its Safety and Preſervation muſt depend upon ſuch Uncertainties. We have Troops that have paſs'd through a long Apprentiſhip, and to our coſt have learned that unhappy Trade, which is now become ſo univerſal, that it is thereby made neceſſary; we muſt either be preſerved by it, or we muſt periſh by it. Many gallant Gentlemen have broke the courſe of their Studies, and the other Methods of Life they were in: It will not only be a hardſhip put upon them, but it will be the rendring our ſelves naked and defenceleſs, if, after all the Reputation that we have riſen to in War, we ſhould ſink into an unbecomming Remiſsneſs in Peace, and upon the remote and uncertain Fears of Dangers that will probably never happen, expoſe our ſelves to thoſe which we may certainly look for, as ſoon as we have put our ſelves out of a Capacity of reſiſting them. To tell you Truth, I cannot ſee ſome Men grow all of the ſudden ſuch wonderful Patriots, ſo jealous of the Prerogative, and ſuch Zealots for publick Liberty, without remembring what their Behaviour was, ſome years ago, in the late Reigns; when we had not only all the juſteſt Cauſes of Jealouſie, but all the Certainties of Evidence: The Deſigns were bare-faced, and the Attempts

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were bold; and yet ſome were then ſilent, and others went into them, with as hearty a Zeal for Arbitrarineſs as they ſeem now to put on for Liberty. The Methods they have taken during the War have been ſo ill diſguiſed, that few will believe they are in earneſt, when they talk of Liberty and Law, who ſeemed to have laboured hard to lay us open to Invaſion and Conqueſt. What they could not compaſs during the War, they hope now to bring about by laying us aſleep in Peace; for if we let go a real Security, and truſt to an imaginary one, we may pay too dear for the Experiment, and be convinced of our Error when it will be no more in our Power to correct it.

But I know ſome will urge the *Roman* and *Lacedemonian* States for our Militia. It is a wrong way of arguing, to apply the Precedent of any one Time to another, unleſs all Things in both Times did agree. Every Thing is ſafe in any State, when it is equal, if not ſuperior to thoſe about it. *Lacedemon* and *Rome* were at leaſt upon the ſame foot with their Neighbours. They were indeed far ſuperiour to them: At *Lacedemon* they bred their Youth to nothing but War, or to other Exerciſes that render them fit for it, and to a ſhort and pointed way of Talking. They had neither Arts nor Learning among them: So that their whole Republick was like a Standing Army, that threatned the reſt of *Greece*. The *Romans*, in the Times of their Liberty, were but a little diſtinguiſhed from them. They allowed indeed

of Agriculture, and put their own Hands to it, which the *Lacedemonians* left to their Slaves: But they were all trained to War; and no Man among them could pretend to Imployments, 'till he could reckon up so many Campaigns, and shew the Wounds he had received in them: So that here was a Military Republick. It was not only equal but superior to all about them, for this very thing, and so no wonder if it conquered them. These Precedents can never suit our Times, unless we could change our whole Constitution at home, as well as the State of Affairs abroad, and banish from us not only Luxury but both Wealth and Trade. The accounts that we have of the Militia in *Sweden* are not very encouraging: The new modelling it there has signified little to preserve their Liberty.

Others will perhaps ask, How did our Ancestors not only defend our Countrey, but render it terrible to all about it, particularly to those from whom we seem now to be most in danger? This is a Topick that may furnish a great deal of popular Eloquence, and may impose upon such as are proud of the Valour of their Countrey, and have read only so much History as to remember the Names of some Battels, and the Numbers of the Armies. But all were then alike as to this Matter, while all Nations were equally ignorant of War, and were only set on the Arts of Peace; then, no doubt, in those short Wars that broke out, the braver Nation had always the better. But it

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is evident from the first Beginnings of History down to this day, that Regular Troops were always too hard for a Militia. *Lacedemon*, *Athens*, and *Thebes*, in their Turns had the better of one another, as their Armies were better trained, and had more Experience in War. At last the King of *Macedon*, who had been much despised by them, subdued them all. *Cyrus*, by training the *Persians*, conquered the *Babylonians*; and *Alexander* by the Army which his Father had trained, thô he had numerous Armies, or rather a great Militia brought against him, yet he made an easy as well as a speedy Conquest of the *Persian* Empire. While the *Romans* were but a Militia, thô they were the best that ever was, they made War on their Neighbours, who were weaker than they, with great Advantage; but when *Hannibal* came against them with a trained Army, they fell before him upon every Occasion, till a long War had taught them that Art, and then they not only beat him out of *Italy*, but forced *Carthage* to a Submission. Nothing stood before the *Roman* Armies, as long as they were kept under Discipline, but when all the order of War was broke, and they became a Militia, the Northern Nations in *Europe*, as well as the Saracens in the *East*, over-run the *Roman* Empire. As the Saracens slackened their Discipline, the *Turks* carried it from them: And if they had depended on their *Timariots*, and had not trusted more to their *Janisaries* and *Spahi's*, they had not been the Terror

of *Chriſtendom* for ſo many Ages. So certain it is, from the Hiſtories of all Nations, that regular and diſciplined Troops will be far ſuperior to the beſt and ſtrongeſt Militia in the World.

To all this it may be ſaid, How did we do in Queen *Eliſabeth*'s Time? Our Militia was then our only Army; to it we truſted, and we were preſerved by it. But I muſt crave leave to put you in mind of ſome Particulars in this part of our Hiſtory: We were then in ſuch imminent Danger, that we were given for gone by the wiſeſt Men of the Age: It was the Storms and Winds, the diſproportioned Bulk of their Ships, the Stiffneſs of the Orders, and the Diſtaſte given to the Prince of *Parma*; all which concurred at that time to ſave *England*: Neither our Militia, nor our Fleet had ſhare in it. There was an extraordinary Concurrence of many Things in that juncture that preſerved us: But it were to preſume too much on Providence to lay our ſelves as open as we were then, becauſe we were at that time ſo wonderfully delivered. But I muſt tell you our Danger is now much greater: *Spain*, it is true, had then a great Armada, vaſt Treaſures, and well diſciplined Armies; But tho' their Army lay near us in *Flanders*, the Scene of their Councils, their Fleet and Treaſures were at a great diſtance from us: And yet all the wiſe Men of that time thought we muſt have periſhed then. The Danger is now both nearer and greater; a mighty Power, well united, and practiſed in War, and a great

great Naval Force is in view of us. It will be therefore no Argument, becauſe we run a great risk in Q. *Eliſabeth*'s time, but were wonderfully ſaved, that therefore now, when we may be in greater hazard, and have a more formidable Neighbour at our very Doors, we ought to take no care of our ſelves, but neglect the Only probable means of our Preſervation; we have had Two wonderful Eighty Eights, but we preſume too much if we look for a Third, without taking any further Care how, or by what means, we ſhall be ſaved.

I will add no more on this head, but will only tell you a Saying of one of the *Vere*'s, which is ſtill remembred in the Family. The Queen ſent to the States for thoſe two famous Generals, to command her Army. It ſeemed full of Zeal and Courage: The Queen rid up and down through it, to animate the Soldiers, and was every where anſwered with Shouts and Acclamations: She asked one of the Brothers, what he thought of the Army; he anſwered, It was a brave Army: But ſhe ſaw by his manner that he was in ſome doubt about it, ſo ſhe charged him to explain himſelf; he ſaid, He had not the Name of a Coward in the World, but he was the only Coward there. They were all wiſhing to have the *Spaniards* land, and every Man was telling what Feats he would then do; he was the only Man that was trembling for fear of it.

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The laſt and ſtrongeſt Objection againſt all this is, That this Force will grow upon us, and continue among us: It will have ſuch an Influence within Doors, that it will maintain it ſelf in the H. of Commons; or, if that ſhould fail, it will turn them out of Doors, and quickly find ways to ſubſiſt, to grow upon the Ruins of Liberty and Property. This is a large Field; and Hiſtory is ſo full of Inſtances this way, that it will be eaſie to open copiouſly on the ſubject. From the *Prætorian* Cohorts down to our modern Armies, enough can be gathered to give a very frightful Repreſentation of a Standing Army. Who doubts it? But all the Rhetorick that this head will afford is wrong applied in this caſe. It is not to be ſuppoſed, but that once a year a Parliament muſt have this matter a-freſh under their Conſideration. They will ſee how the State of Affairs varies, either at Home or Abroad; and whether the Forces are brought under ſuch a Management, that there is juſt cauſe of Jealouſy. And I leave it to you to judge, whether it is poſſible in ſo ſhort a time, ſo to model and influence it, as to prepare them to invade their Country, and to deſtroy our Conſtitution. What *Ceſar*, with all his Genius, could not work his Army to, but after Ten Years Conduct and Succeſs, can give ſmall Encouragement to others to attempt to bring it about, in one Year. Perhaps you are more afraid of a Secret Influence, than of Open Violence from them. The ſhort

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of this is, You are afraid the House will be corrupted: I confess it is hard to answer this, Jealousy is stubborn and incurable; Melancholy when it grows to be a Disease, raises many imaginary Fears; they who are haunted with that sullen Humour, neither know what they are Afraid of, nor why. Possible Accidents are ever before them; and the thinking of these perpetually, ruines their Health, sours their Humour, and makes them neglect all their present and certain Concerns, while they are ever dreaming of what will probably never happen. We must consider our present Danger, and the likeliest Ways of securing our selves from it, without amusing our selves with what may possibly be brought about at some distance of time. Our Representatives do well to secure our Constitution, by the most effectual Means they can think on: But after all, we must trust *England* to a *House of Commons*, that is to it self. When ever the fatal Time comes, that this Nation grows weary of Liberty, and has neither the Virtue, the Wisdom, nor the Force to preserve its Constitution, it will deliver all up; let all the Laws possible, and all the Bars imaginable, be put in the way to it. It is no more possible to make a Government immortal, than it is to make a Man immortal. I do not deny but several Inconveniences may be apprehended from a Standing Force, and therefore I should not go about to perswade you to it, if the Thing did not seem indispensibly necessary

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to our Preservation. I would not have us venture upon present and certain Ruine, because that which must preserve us now from it, may at some time hereafter have ill Effects on our Liberty. They cannot be Considerable, as long as *England* is true to it self; and whosoever the Nation has lost that Noble Sense of Liberty, by which it has been so long preserved, it will soon make Betters for it self, that it should find none at hand ready made.

To conclude, This Matter is of so nice, and yet of so important a Nature, that it ought to be severely examined, without false Colours, or popular Rhetorick; you know me to be so jealous of Liberty, to have been always so true to it, to have ventured so much for it, and to have such a Stake in it, that you cannot suspect me. You know that I neither have, nor can have any Views in this Matter, but at our present Safety, as well as the Continuance of our Constitution and Liberty for the future.